

SHOCK SHOTS

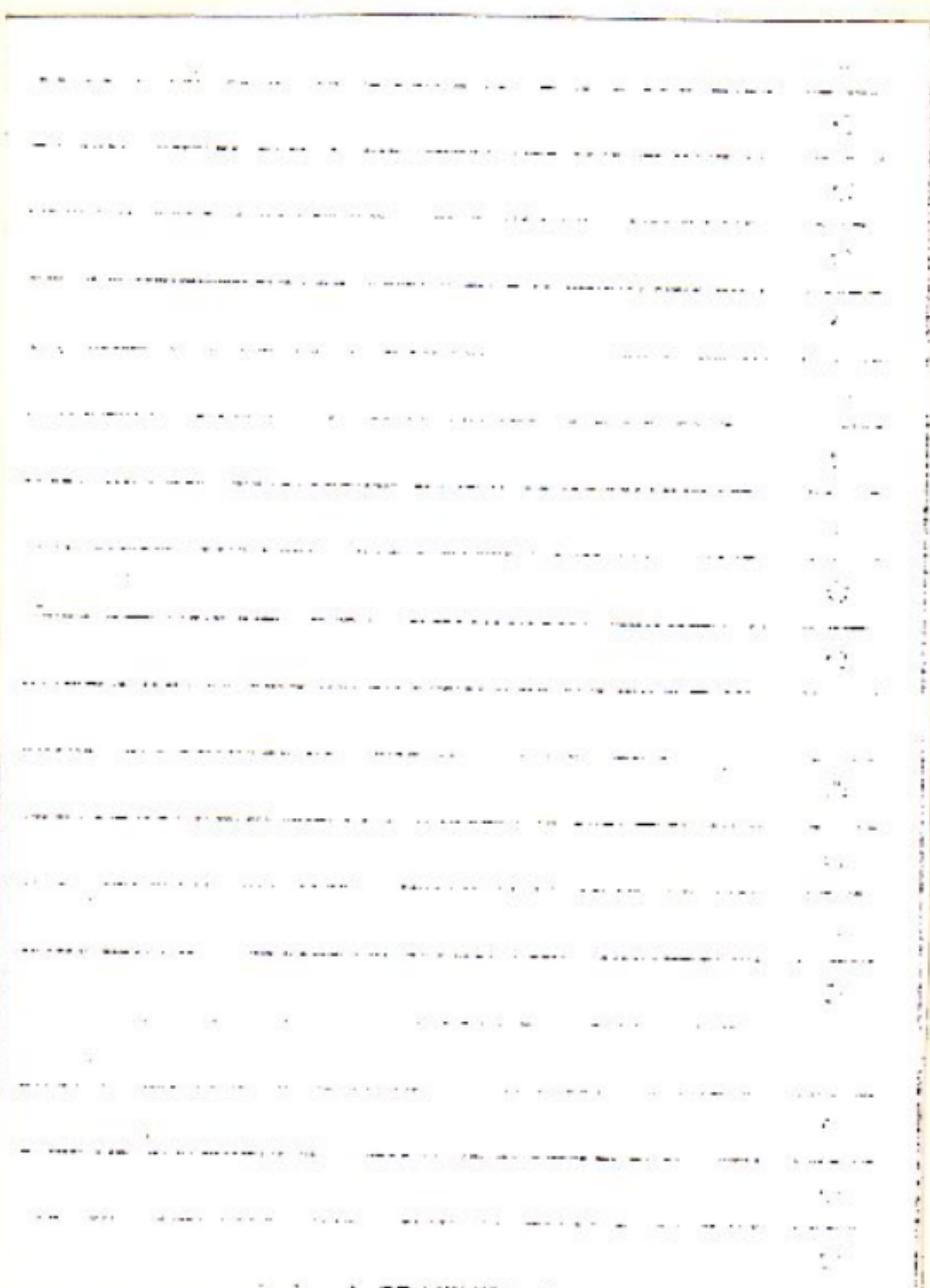
GHOSSES



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COLLECTOR'S BOOK #1

SCHOLASTIC



SHOCK SHOTS

Collector's Book #1

GHOSTS

by Dona Smith

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Do you believe in ghosts? II

Chapter One

INTRODUCING...

GHOSTS

Boo! Do you ever get just a little bit nervous when you walk past a cemetery? Would you spend the night in a haunted house — all alone? Do you believe in ghosts?

First of all, everyone knows what a ghost is, right? It's the *spirit* of a dead person that living people can see — or hear, or sense. Now then, why are people afraid of ghosts? There really is no simple answer, but fear of ghosts goes all the way back to ancient times.

Primitive people were afraid of things they couldn't understand — so death had them *plenty* scared. They believed that the spirits of the

dead had terrifying powers. For instance, they thought that a ghost could bring disease, drought, or other misfortune on a village. Understandably, nobody wanted to get on the wrong side of a ghost!

All over the world, people tried to find ways to keep the spirits of the dead away from the living. In fact, some say that's how the use of tombstones got started. What's used as a memorial marker today was originally just a heavy stone rolled on top of a grave to keep the ghost from getting out!

Some who study ghosts insist that they *aren't* evil — except in scary movies and books. They say the worst a ghost can do to you is scare you out of your wits.

Anyway, there are those who think ghosts are real. Then again, there are those who say they don't believe in ghosts. What do you think?

How to Recognize a Ghost

If you're ever in doubt as to whether or not you've really seen a ghost, here are some hints:

- Ghosts look just like people or animals. Except you can see through them ... if you can see them at all. Sometimes, movie ghosts use "ectoplasm" — special ghost stuff — to become visible.
- Ghosts can do everything people can do — and lots of things they can't, like walk through walls.
- When ghosts walk, they don't leave any footprints. This is a *dead giveaway*.
- Of course ... er ... of course, you know that when there's a sudden chill in the room, it might mean there is a ghost around.
- There are very few reports of naked ghosts. So, while seeing a ghost may scare you to death, at

least it won't be *embarrassing*.

Some say the image of a ghost is created in the viewer's mind with ESP (extrasensory perception). Others say ghosts are just hallucinations. Now that you have this *illuminating* information, you'll have to make up your mind if you've seen a ghost — or are just "seeing things."

Parapsychologists, people who study ghosts, say there are many kinds. Here's a short list:

- When a ghost keeps doing the same thing over and over again, it's called a *haunting*. Say, for example, you spend a few nights in a haunted house. Night after night the same ghost does a moon walk backward down the hall outside your bedroom. Is this just a boring ghost that never does anything new? No. It means the haunted house has made a



Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd play parapsychologists in the hit movie Ghostbusters.

recording of the image just as a camcorder would. If the ghost stops to talk to you one night, however, you've got yourself a real "live" ghost.

- Surprise! Not all ghosts are dead. Huh? Well, they say a ghost could be a *live person* having an *out-of-the-body experience!*
- A *poltergeist* is a "noisy" ghost who throws things around the room, opens and closes doors, turns the lights off and on, and generally *trashes* your house. Today, though, experts think poltergeist incidents aren't really caused by ghosts, but by someone living in the house who is going through some kind of conflict. Often, teenagers get blamed, because...well...they're going through many changes.
- All around England are the *screaming skulls* — skulls that get

really mad if they're moved from their favorite spot. The skull is "haunted" by the ghost of its owner. Screaming skulls don't exactly scream, but they kick up quite a fuss in other ways. They might cause a storm to blow up or a bridge to collapse....

- A *doppelgänger* is the ghost double of a living person — your own ghostly twin! Sometimes a *doppelgänger* is a death omen, and sometimes not. (But who wants to wait around to find out?) The idea goes back to superstitions about mirror images. Ancient Greeks thought your soul (your double) would be trapped if you looked at your reflection.

Getting Rid of Ghosts

Since so many people are afraid of ghosts, it's not surprising that all

over the world there are strategies for getting rid of them or keeping them away. Most of these strategies come from primitive, tribal cultures. Often, the people try to play a trick on the ghost so it can't find its way back home.

A family might remove a corpse from the house by breaking through a wall or going through a window instead of using the front door. The purpose is to *fool* the ghost about the *real* entrance to the house so the ghost can't find it to return. Or, the corpse might be taken to the cemetery by a winding route, in hopes that it will become *confused* about the direction traveled.

Among modern cultures people have their own ways of getting rid of, or at least managing, ghosts. So if you have a problem ghost, here are some things you might try:

- Ask the ghost to leave.



Frightened characters fight against violent spirits in the 1982 science-horror flick Poltergeist.

- Ask the ghost very politely to visit only at certain times.
- Ask the ghost to stay in a certain part of the house.
- Ignore the ghost and hope it will go away.
- If the ghost is a poltergeist that breaks things, pretend you couldn't care less about the things being destroyed. Each time it happens, say something like, "Glad we got rid of *that* useless thing!" The ghost will get bored, and *probably* will leave.

If all the above methods fail, here is a ghost-ridding method many people *swear* by:

- Imagine a box around the ghost. Now move the box outside. Bye-bye, ghost!

Chapter Two

A-HUNTING WE WILL GO!

Most people are afraid of ghosts and try very hard to avoid them. But some people *try to seek them out* instead.

Ghosts on Tape

Did you know that Thomas Edison tried to create an instrument that could pick up ghost voices and record them? Now, Mr. Edison wasn't about to admit he believed in ghosts. He just said that *if* they existed, they should have a better way to communicate with us than rapping on tables. His experiments in trying to make his ghost

recorder were shrouded in secrecy until the day he died.

"Everybody knows you can't record a ghost's voice anyway," some people said. But others wanted to follow in Edison's footsteps and give it a try. In 1959, a Swedish painter and film producer named Friedrich Jurgenson thought he had captured ghost voices when he was trying to record bird songs. A psychologist, Dr. Konstantin Raudive, got very interested when he heard about this and began making tapes of his own. He also claimed to have captured ghost voices on tape, and wrote a book about it called *Breakthroughs*.

The messages on Raudive's tapes were short and very confusing. They sounded a little like a bad phone connection from another country. Some people thought the "voices" came from space aliens.

But lots of people believed that they were voices from beyond the grave and began making their own tapes. None of them were very clear, and the "voices" were probably a combination of noise and wishful thinking.

Ghosts on Film

In 1862, in Boston, a photographer named Mumler said he'd taken his own self-portrait, and that his cousin who had been dead for twelve years appeared in the photograph when he developed the picture. Everyone thought that was exciting, and lots of people wanted pictures taken with *their* dead relatives.

Pretty soon Mumler was making a bundle turning out pictures of dead relatives. The features of these ghosts were usually too fuzzy to recognize. But a couple of times,



With trick photography, images like this one create a ghostly effect.

their features were too clear, and people recognized that these were the faces of Mumler's *employees*. Uh-oh! Mumler had to leave Boston in a hurry to avoid being prosecuted, but it wasn't too long before he was up to his old tricks again in New York City. Mumler was never successfully prosecuted for fraud because too many people didn't want to believe he was a fake.

Some photographers during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, *really believed* they had taken pictures of ghosts. But there's a down-to-earth explanation. In those days, for photos to be taken indoors, the film had to be exposed for a very long time — perhaps more than an hour. If someone happened to pause in front of the camera during that exposure period, there would be a ghostly image on the film.

Hardly anyone believes in pictures of ghosts today. But one person who does is Count Augusto Olivero, a wealthy lawyer who lives in a restored wing of an ancient castle in Turin, Italy. The castle is said to be haunted by as many as seventeen ghosts. They are believed to be the ghosts of knights who were tortured in the castle, and some who were burned at the stake on the estate. Other ghosts are thought to be victims of a plague that struck in 1631. To you, the thought of living in a place like that might be pretty creepy. But the count isn't the least bit scared with all those ghosts running around. In fact, he's ecstatic.

Count Olivero has turned the castle into a tourist attraction by inviting people to come with their cameras to midnight ghost-watching vigils. Some people claim to have taken ghost pictures there, and

Olivero says he has pictures of his own. A ghostly picture was also captured on film by a local TV station.

Talking to Ghosts

While some people claim to have seen ghosts, others claim to have spoken with ghosts. However, conversations with ghosts are usually held with the help of a *medium*.

Mediums are the go-betweens from our world to the ghost world. For a fee, they go into a trance to get in touch with our friends on the "other side." Most mediums active today are *mental mediums*, who claim not only to speak directly to the dead but may even have the spirits speak *through* them. They are also called *channelers* because information from the dead is *channeled* through them.

Information channeled by medi-



Patrick Swayze plays a ghost, and Whoopi Goldberg plays a medium in the award-winning movie Ghost.

ums isn't always just talk. Sometimes it's *automatic writing*, written by the channeler's hand, but controlled by the ghost.

Besides mental mediums there are *physical mediums*. Physical mediums are the ones whose sessions, or *séances*, get lively — with things flying through the air, and ghosts rapping on tables and sometimes even showing up. There aren't too many of these mediums around anymore, because so many phony ones were discovered. The person most responsible for exposing these fakers was the great magician Harry Houdini. Houdini made this a personal crusade.

Perhaps because he knew how to do magic tricks, the famous Houdini soon figured out that a lot of mediums were just using trickery. All they wanted was to cheat grieving people out of their money. This

disgusted Houdini, and he decided to expose as many of them as possible. He lectured against them on-stage and showed how they created their own "miracles." For instance, often a spooky glowing hand would appear to float through the darkened room — all by itself — during a séance. Houdini showed it was nothing more than a glove painted with glow-in-the-dark color and mounted on a black stick!

In spite of his crusade against fake mediums, it seems that Houdini thought communicating with the dead was indeed possible. He and author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (who created the famous Sherlock Holmes) were friends, and Houdini went to some séances at Doyle's house. During one of the séances, Houdini claimed he received a message from his dead mother. But the message was written

in English — and Houdini's mother didn't speak English. Doyle suggested that maybe Houdini's mother learned to speak English as a ghost. Houdini didn't find that remark very amusing. In fact, he got so angry that he never spoke to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle again.

Houdini started using other mediums to seek contact with his dead mother. The more he saw, the less he believed. He exposed so many fake mediums that they started looking out for Houdini and refused to go on with their séances if he showed up. So Houdini started wearing a disguise. Once he even offered a ten-thousand-dollar prize to anyone who could produce a real spirit. But no one even tried.

Houdini died on Halloween in 1926. The fact that he died on the traditional festival of the dead sparked many rumors. One was that

he would communicate a message from beyond the grave to his wife in secret code. The existence of such a message was never proven. But even today, mediums all over the world hold séances on Halloween, and often one claims to have contacted the spirit of Houdini. In a way, the mediums have had the last laugh.

Ghost Hunters

Real-life ghost hunters are scientists who don't wear funny suits and go around looking for little green ghosts, like the fellows in the movie *Ghostbusters!* They investigate reports of ghost sightings and study ghosts and other phenomena such as ESP and clairvoyance.

One of history's best-known ghost hunters was Harry Price, born in England in 1881. His most famous case was the investigation of the

Borley Rectory, a big, ugly Victorian house that was built in 1863.

Borley Rectory was one of the most haunted houses ever. People saw ghosts there all the time. *Plus*, doorbells rang by themselves, footsteps were heard in the hall when no feet were around, and words mysteriously appeared, scrawled on the walls. No one knows why so many ghosts wanted to haunt this one ugly house — but they did.

Price moved into the rectory with a ghost-hunting kit full of things such as a still camera, a container of mercury for detecting tremors, and cloth overshoes to creep around in silently. He claimed he collected a lot of evidence, and even wrote two books about the things he found. But later, Price's research was discredited. People interested in studying ghosts said Price was a faker who didn't really find anything ...

he just kind of exaggerated.

Shortly after Harry Price died in 1948, there was a new story being told about him — that he had returned, as a ghost!

Probably the most famous ghost hunter today is Hans Holtzer. Holtzer not only finds ghosts in castles and cemeteries, but in such unmysterious places as ordinary houses in ordinary neighborhoods. In fact, one of the "ordinary" houses that Holtzer and other ghost hunters investigated was in Amityville, Long Island. The 1979 movie *The Amityville Horror* was based on a book that claimed to be a true story about this famous house.

The house had been the site of a hideous multiple murder the year before it was put up for sale. After the new family moved into the house, mysterious, terrifying things happened, which made living in the



*The haunted house in the 1979 chiller
The Amityville Horror.*

house a nightmare. The family fled from the house a month after they moved in.

Here are some of the things they claimed they experienced in the house:

- Strange voices seemed to come from inside *themselves*.
- Objects moved around and were sometimes broken — on their own.
- Green slime oozed from the ceiling.
- A hoard of flies appeared in the house in wintertime.
- Strange ghostly figures appeared.

Many people believed the family's story. But among most people interested in studying ghosts, the Amityville horror house is regarded as one big hoax. Consider this: After the family moved out, people who later lived in the house in Amityville had *no strange experiences to report....*

Chapter Three

REAL-LIFE GHOST STORIES

Ghostly Legends

When it comes to ghosts, it's often hard to tell what's true and what isn't. Many stories about ghosts are called *legends*— stories that are somewhere between fact and fiction. Legends are told over and over again and passed down through generations. Some people think that legends are fictional stories. Many others insist that they're real happenings. Take a look at these and see what you think. Fact or fiction, you'll have to agree, each one is absolutely, positively spell-binding!

The Vanishing Hitchhiker

A couple was driving down an old country road when they saw a young girl hitchhiking. She told them she needed to get back to her farmhouse, and that it wasn't very far. The couple decided to give the girl a lift, and so she hopped into the backseat of the car and sat there quietly.

When they arrived at the farmhouse the driver turned to speak to the girl...only to discover that nobody was there! The couple thought this was really incredible. Nothing like that had ever happened to them before! So they decided to tell the people who owned the farmhouse. They knocked on the door and, when the owners answered, the couple explained everything to them.

The people who owned the farm-

house told the travelers a tale that gave *them* chills. They had had a daughter just like the girl who had been hitchhiking, they said, but she had disappeared years ago. In fact, the last time she was seen alive...she was hitchhiking on that very road!

A Ghostly Battle

Not too long ago, a young woman rode her bicycle from her hotel into the Scottish Highlands to see the gap in the mountain range known as the Pass of Killiecrankie. In 1689, it had been the site of a terrible battle. But now it was peaceful and beautiful. The young woman was tired from her long ride, so she decided to take a nap.

Soon she was awakened by the sound of gunfire. To her horror, the young woman realized that she was

now in the middle of the bloody battle of 1689 — between Scottish Highlanders and the redcoat soldiers of William of Orange! A woman with a dagger was walking through the battlefield, scavenging items from dead soldiers. Suddenly she saw the young woman and charged toward her with the dagger as if to slit her throat!

The young woman fainted. When she regained consciousness, the Pass of Killiecrankie was peaceful and quiet as before.

When she got back to her hotel, the young woman told the hotel staff what had happened. They weren't at all surprised. They reported that many people had had the *same* eerie experience.

The Flying Dutchman

Once a captain and his crew were

trying to sail around the Cape of Good Hope, on the southern tip of Africa, when suddenly they found themselves in the middle of a terrible storm. The crew was very scared, and begged their captain to help them find safety. This captain was not a very nice guy, and was a little loony to boot. He refused, laughed in their faces, and started teasing them about being a bunch of sissies.

This captain said that he wasn't afraid of anything, and he dared the very heavens to sink his ship. But he was soon punished for his boasting and daring. Out of nowhere, a glowing figure appeared on board. The captain tried to shoot it, but the gun blew up in his hands.

The figure told the captain that since he liked to sail so much, he was doomed to sail forever without any rest. And since he liked being so mean to sailors, he would be the

most feared and hated spirit at sea. Anyone who saw his ship would have bad luck. So this evil captain would be known as bad news for eternity.

Since then, anyone who saw *The Flying Dutchman* suffered for it. Sailors were terrified of the phantom ship, because the sight of *The Flying Dutchman* meant certain disaster. Among other unfortunate happenings, it has led ships onto rocks and somehow even caused all the food on board a ship to go bad!

Some think that *The Flying Dutchman* is based on a real seventeenth-century Dutch captain named Bernard Fokke. There was something strange about Fokke, folks say. When his ship disappeared suddenly, it became the basis for all sorts of rumors ... like the legend of *The Flying Dutchman*.

Chapter Four

REEL AND UN-REAL TALES

There are lots of ghosts that people *know* aren't real — but they love them anyway! In fact, many of these ghosts exist not only in books — they're also mega-stars of stage, screen, and television!

The family of *The Amityville Horror* wasn't the only family to discover that they'd moved into the *wrong* house! In the 1982 movie *Poltergeist*, when a family moves into a new house in the suburbs, so many ghostly things happen that their life is turned into a horror show. Ghost forces even try to contact their daughter, Carol Anne, through the TV set! Just when the



In Poltergeist, supernatural forces try to contact little Carol Anne through the TV set.

family thinks they're finally safe from these chaotic creatures, they're back! — in *Poltergeist II*.

In the seventeenth century, a family bought a fancy estate and found out it was haunted. But their ghost was sometimes comical, and sometimes sad and insulted, because the family just refused to be scared of him! This is the story in the book *The Canterville Ghost*, by Oscar Wilde. Wilde's ghost became a star in *The Canterville Ghost* — the movie made in 1946.

The biggest ghost mega-stars by far were the ghosts of Charles Dickens' book *A Christmas Carol*. Here's the story: First, Marley's Ghost appears to his old business partner, Ebenezer Scrooge, on Christmas Eve. Marley, dragging a heavy chain, is being punished in death for his miserable ways in life. He visits Scrooge to warn him of one last

chance to escape a similar fate.

Pretty soon, all sorts of ghosts start showing up. They're The Ghost of Christmas Past, The Ghost of Christmas Present, and The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. These three ghosts appear to show Scrooge what he's really like, and what can happen if he doesn't lighten up and start being a nice guy. Wow, were these guys a hit! Not only did their story become a classic novel, they appeared in the theater, and just look at all the movies they've been in: Three movie versions of the story were made in 1938, 1951, and 1984 — all titled *A Christmas Carol*. And it didn't stop there. In 1935 and in 1970, two movie versions were made with the title *Scrooge*. Then there was a very modern movie version made in 1988 called *Scrooged*. And in 1992 came *The Muppets' Christmas Carol*.

Could a ghost get any classier than Shakespeare's ghost? This isn't the ghost of William Shakespeare being referred to here. This is the ghost Shakespeare created in his tragic play *Hamlet*. Hamlet was a movie star as well as a stage star, several times. The most recent movie starred Mel Gibson!

In Sherlock Holmes's story *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, a giant ghostly hound appeared on the moors when any member of the Baskerville family died. The hound became a screen star in the movie *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. At least five movie versions of this story were made.

We certainly wouldn't want to leave out this very special TV star, *Casper the Friendly Ghost*. "The friendliest ghost you know" has been a childhood TV friend, and is still entertaining kids today.



Even the muppets get in on the ghostly act in The Muppets' Christmas Carol.

Chapter Five

GHOST-LY GIGGLES

These jokes will kill you!

How can you tell when ghosts are around?

You can hear 'em coffin!

Why is it so easy to tell when a ghost is lying?

Because you can see right through him!

Why do ghost owls always sound like they're crying?

Because they keep going "Boo-hoot, boo-hoot"!

Where would you go to find ghosts?

To their favorite haunts!

What kind of plot would a ghost's favorite story have?

A cemetery plot!

Why did the ghost get scared?

Something spooked him!

Why was the ghost sure she'd win the race?

She knew she had a ghost of a chance!

How do you wish a ghost actor good luck before a performance?

Tell him to knock 'em dead!

Why did the ghost take a ride in an elevator?

He wanted to raise his spirits!

Who writes the best ghost stories?

Ghost writers!

How do ghosts break in to haunted houses?

With skeleton keys!

Why did the ghost hate her job?

It was a dead-end career!

What do you call a box full of ghosts?

A bunch of boo-boos!

What do ghosts do when they're bored?

They dig up something to do!

What's a ghost's favorite vacation spot?

The Petrified Forest!

What kind of pet does a ghost have?

A scaredy-cat!

What did the ghost say after she'd been standing up for hours?
My feet are killing me!

What's the best ride at the Haunted Amusement Park?
The Roller Ghoster!

What is a ghost's favorite game?
Hide-and-go-shriek!

What's a ghost's *second* most favorite game?
Peek-a-boo!

Why do ghosts often need sweaters?
Because ghosts are always chilling!

What did the ghost say after a tough day at the office?
I'm dead tired!



*A shocking scene from the sensational screen chiller
The Exorcist.*

Oh, by the way — even if you *don't* believe in ghosts, it's fun to visit a "haunted house." These historic houses are listed by the U.S. Department of Commerce. Just write to your local Chamber of Commerce for the location and visiting hours of the ones in your state. Really!

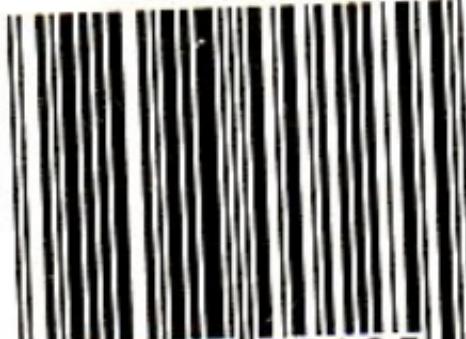


GHOSTS

WARNING: If you dare to read this book, be prepared to experience... spine-tingling chills and... a ghoulishly good time! Shock Shots: Ghosts is brimming with hair-raising facts, legends, lore, and laughs about these out-of-sight fright figures. This pocket-sized thriller is also packed with pages of great photos to check out. Shock Shots: Ghosts is fun... exciting... it's a SCREAM! And, you can scare up more shocking info about other favorite creepy creatures in this Shock Shots collector's series.

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